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Little Birds

by [Lunari](#)

Summary

This started as an extension of a prompt from my 100 Ways challenge. It turned into something more.

So, join in for the entire lives of our birdmoms and their kids.

There's fluff. A lot of it.

We'll figure it out.

It was a rare, double day off for the pair and they chose, as always, to spend it at the park. Fareeha sat against a tree, one leg splayed out before her, the other bent with an arm thrown over it, acting as a seat back for her wife. Angela was lost in a book, raising a pale hand to brush aside her bangs when the breeze became unruly.

It was truly a perfect day. The sun's rays didn't reach them in the shade, the cool breeze chased off any lingering uncomfortable heat, birds sang and Angela's soft humming culminated into a glorious afternoon.

The two sat without speaking, Angela in her book world and Fareeha gazing over the gleefully laughing children and their parents as they darted around the play-gyms and fields. Fareeha's deep sigh pulled Angela from her reading and she cast concerned blue eyes up to her current chair.

"Do you ever want that?" Fareeha asked after a few beats. Angela sat her book to the side and shifted, back fully against Fareeha's chest. She tugged her wife's arm into her lap and gave it a small hug.

"Now that our lives have calmed down?" Angela asked quietly, eyes now joining Fareeha's as they watched the screaming toddlers have the time of their lives in the foam pit. Angela's breath of 'yes' was nearly lost on the breeze.

Fareeha tightened her grip on her wife, small smile on her lips. She dropped her chin to Angela's shoulder, free hand coming up to play with the gold band wrapped around the blonde's finger. "We have a lot of thinking to do, then," Fareeha spoke quietly into her wife's ear before dropping a kiss on her pale neck.

Angela let herself fully slacken, head dropping back to rest against Fareeha's shoulder. She pulled her wife's dark hands into her lap and threaded their fingers, fascinated as always by their stark contrast in skin tone. "I have a few contacts I can talk to, some journals I could bring home. If you're that interested, of course." Angela said, voice already trailing off in uncertainty.

A small huff sounded off, breath tickling the fine hairs behind Angela's ear. "Don't start trying to nervously backtrack now." A kiss dropped to the patch of skin just beneath her ear. "There is nothing more I want than to make a family with you."

Angela turned then, shifting disbelieving eyes to her wife. "Oh really now, *nothing* more? Not even, dare I say it, *justice*?" Fareeha barely contained the barked laughter, giving the blonde a

playful nudge with a roll of her eyes.

“I will admit,” Fareeha began with a stubborn sniff of her nose, chin in the air so she could glare at Angela from the corner of her eyes. “It was a close race.” The resulting red flush across the blonde’s cheeks, the indignant huff, the dropped jaw and swat to the arm was an endearing response that only caused Fareeha to chuckle.

The two sat in relative silence pouring over the various medical texts and Angela’s tablet that had way too many tabs open to continue functioning properly. A frustrated huff would pass Fareeha’s lips before she would grumpily turn a page. Angela at her side would grumble under her breath before closing out of a tab in her browser. Every so often, a mouth would open in preparation, finger already pointing at a promising line of text before eyes would read further, ending in disappointment.

Fareeha gave a final frustrated huff and flipped the folder of medical journals closed, standing and pulling her hands above her head to stretch out. A digital ping and an excited yelp from her wife drew her attention and she cast her eyes over her shoulder.

“I think I’ve found it!” Angela exclaimed, finger jabbing against the screen, tip resting against her email inbox. Fareeha let her arms fall as she turned to rejoin her wife on the couch. “There’s a method that was developed back in the twenties. It’s come out of trial and has had several successful cases.” Her voice trailed off as she continued to read the documentation her colleague had sent over. Fareeha leaned over to read along with her but got lost through all of the medical terms. A few she understood, of course, it was impossible to be in a relationship with a leading scientist and doctor and not learn a term or two.

A pale hand trailed down her forearm before threading fingers through Fareeha’s, giving a squeezing tug as she turned to summarize the medical journal, blue eyes alight with excitement. “I know we were leaning toward adoption, but what if it could be a biological child?”

Fareeha’s eyes shuttered, masking the disappointment that lanced through her at the thought. There was something primal demanding she make offspring herself, not using her wife as a host for someone else’s child. “It would cause too many issues down the line. There have been too many times that donors sued fo-”

“I doubt you’d be suing me for custody,” Angela interjected, eyes carefully watching Fareeha’s emotions play out on her face. When her features finally settled on confusion, Angela continued. “It’s a fairly straightforward process. To put it simply, they use our DNA to create a child. There’s more to it, of course, splicing and integrating and whatnot, but it’s been successful since it hit

human testing.” Fareeha only sat doing a spot on impression of a goldfish. Angela’s hand came up to cradle her wife’s jaw, applying a bit of pressure to stop her open-mouthed gaping.

“Fareehali, the child would be *ours*. ”

Try, try again

Chapter Summary

Angela and Fareeha struggle to make their dreams of family a reality.

Fareeha scrambled at the door, her key never hitting the hole. When she finally unlocked the door, she rushed through the entryway with a string of apologies already falling past her lips. She poked her head into the nearest doorway and checked the room Angela used as an office, finding it empty. Heaving a sigh, she made her way to the kitchen and saw her wife at the table, mug of long-cold tea held at her chin between both hands, eyes staring off into the distance. A look of sympathy and understanding crossed her features as she moved to sit next to the blonde.

“We need to leave, ya amar. We’re already late.” Fareeha said quietly, trying to coax her wife into moving. When the blonde made no response, a dark hand came up to trail along a pale forearm. Blue eyes shot to the hand tracing patterns against her skin before darting up to meet amber. Her chin quivered before she was able to reign in the response. Fareeha made a small noise in the back of her throat as she recognized the emotions swimming in her wife’s eyes and she gently guided the mug back to the table before leaning forward and pulling Angela into a firm hug.

“What if they say it hasn’t worked?” Angela muttered into Fareeha’s neck. “How many times are we supposed to hear ‘no’ and keep trying?” The arms around her tightened, one hand stroking her back soothingly.

Fareeha pulled away and dropped feather light kisses along her temple trailing to the corner of her mouth. “As many times as we need until we hear ‘yes.’” A mocha thumb trailed along Angela’s jawline. “When have we ever given up on something we wanted?”

Angela smiled and dropped her hand to play with Fareeha’s wedding band thoughtfully. “Well, sometimes it took us a while to know what it exactly was that we wanted.” She mused. “But then we fought relentlessly for it.” Fareeha nodded, a supportive grin on her face, and stood.

“Now let’s go find out if we’re getting a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ this time, okay?” Fareeha held out a hand to help her wife to her feet. The blonde laughed, wiping her damp eyes and followed Fareeha out the door.

The office was sparse with only a desk, two patient chairs, and a dusty potted fern. A series of diplomas hung on the wall boasting various degrees. Fareeha and Angela sat, fingers entwined and eyes expectantly trained on the doctor behind the desk. The balding man glanced over the files on his desk before glancing over to the couple over his thin glasses.

He gathered up the manila folder and after tapping it against the desk to realign the papers, he spoke. "It seems this time the procedure wasn't successful." He dropped the news with a sympathetic bluntness. A mocha hand clenched around pale fingers. Fareeha's eyes stayed locked on the man, refusing to look to Angela. She knew her wife would be fighting tears and if Fareeha looked, she would break. She had to be strong for her wife.

He sighed, sat down the folder and steepled his hands above the stack of paper. "If I could step away from my role as your doctor and instead offer you a word as a friend, I'd advise you to wait before your next attempt. Sometimes these things just take time."

Angela's chair creaked as she sat forward with a determined look in her eye. "We'll try again." He opened his mouth to voice more concern, but Angela cut him off. "Today, Dr. Harper."

His mouth shut with a click of teeth. "Very well, I'm sure you know the way." He said with a gesture at the door. "Best of luck."

Fareeha stood and left, holding the door for her wife before dropping a hand to scoop up Angela's. They made their way down the hallway in silence, Angela only breaking it when they reached the door to the surgical wing. "What if the batch is compromised? Do you think we should give more samples? Is it the cryo that is-" Fareeha silenced her wife's ramblings with a gentle kiss, hand supporting the back of her head.

"We have done everything right." Fareeha sighed and closed her eyes, dropping her forehead to rest on Angela's, hands on either side of her jaw. "Sometimes things happen for a reason, right? Well, sometimes things *don't* happen for a reason." She opened her eyes to stare directly into blue, a small quirk at the corner of her lips. Understanding passed between them, a silent communication earned from too many years on the battlefield.

Angela nodded once. "We'll give it this shot and then we take some time." She turned with a determined set to her jaw and walked into the surgical wing.

Fareeha was dreading walking into the house. It was an uncommon feeling and one she never wanted to experience again. She knew that today's doctor visit determined their immediate future

and some stubborn part of the Egyptian wanted to stay outside forever. If she never went in, they never had to go to the doctor, right? She gave her head a firm shake, squared her shoulders and entered the quiet home.

Angela wasn't in any of her usual haunts. Her office was empty, there was no reading blonde on the couch in the den. Both the kitchen table and breakfast nook were empty. She turned down the hall to their bedroom to check if she was napping as was her norm since starting the IVF treatments but the light under the door to the guest bathroom stopped her. Neither of them used the guest bath, preferring their spacious en-suite instead of the slightly cramped hall bathroom. Fareeha gently rapped at the door with a knuckle. "Angela?"

A fumbled clatter of something falling to tile and a muttered curse later, Angela responded. "Just a moment, Liebe!" Fareeha's eyes narrowed. Angela was much too chipper for her current location. She reached down to turn the knob but found it locked. This shocked her more than her wife's odd attitude. Just when she was about to demand the door be opened, it swung wide. Angela stood one of Fareeha's old Egyptian Army shirts and socks, one pulled to her knee, the other drooping around her ankle, wisps of her hair flying about with the breeze from the door. Any other time, Fareeha would have immediately scooped her up and taken her straight to bed, but by now she was sufficiently worried. She cast her eyes behind her wife, assessing the state of the bathroom for any clues but found nothing.

"Alright, explain," Fareeha said, eyes still sliding over her wife's body as if checking for injury. "And let's get you dressed, we're going to be late." Fareeha made to turn, already half a step toward their bedroom when Angela stopped her.

A pale hand tightened around her wrist. "Wait." Angela was staring at the floor, chewing her lip nervously and fiddling with something behind her back.

"You're starting to worry me, ya amar," Fareeha said on a breath, hands moving to clasp Angela's shoulders and stooping to her eye level. "What's going on?"

Angela looked up at her wife through her lashes, wide grin breaking through. "We're not going to the clinic today."

Fareeha sighed, running a hand through her hair. "I know you're disheartened and worried that somehow, *you've* messed up the medical procedure a team of other doctors is performing, but we have to make this appointment. You know how quickly those slots fill."

Angela stood her ground despite Fareeha gently tugging a hand toward their bedroom door. She heaved a sigh and withdrew her hidden hand, holding the fist out to her wife. On reflex, Fareeha's hand shot out and Angela deposited the small white device in the outstretched palm. Fareeha took

it in both hands, turning it over and inspecting it closely. She knew what this was, but it couldn't be...

Fareeha looked to Angela and the blonde nearly cried at the hopeful fear on the Egyptian's face. She simply nodded, tears threatening to fall. "We aren't going to the clinic today, but we will at the end of the week for a prenatal exam." Fareeha's eyes darted back to the little red cross in the results window before snapping back to Angela's, mouth hung open in shock before slowly curling into a wide smile.

The pregnancy test hit the floor, Fareeha dropping it in her haste to pick up and twirl her wife into the hallway, hoots of laughter echoing off the walls. She sat her down immediately, hands running over her flat belly, rushed apologies falling from her lips. Angela only laughed, hand resting over her navel. "He's about the size of a pin head right now, I think he can handle his mother being excited."

Fareeha's grin grew impossibly wider at the title and the confirming words. Angela was pregnant. They did it. *Her* baby was in there. The Egyptian rushed forward, lips crashing into Angela's, words of endearment peppered among kisses. She pulled back and dropped a final kiss on Angela's nose before sinking to her knees and pulling Angela toward her by the hips. She smiled against the woman's taut stomach, whispering promises and vows against the ratty t-shirt, pale hands raising to card through black tresses.

The Pregnancy

Chapter Summary

So we're gonna go the full pregnancy in this chapter. I can't bring myself to rewrite the birth prompt from 100 Ways to Say "I Love You" in Birdmom. I was pretty darn proud of it and don't want to change it to be more fluffy to fit the feel of this work. If you want to read it, go here:

<http://archiveofourown.org/works/10394775/chapters/23316556>

Angela paced, nails picking at a bit of skin on her thumb. The smells and sounds coming from the kitchen did nothing to distract her from her racing thoughts. Though she greatly appreciated Fareeha preparing the night's meal, she was distraught without something to occupy her time until their guests arrived. She'd taken to passing between her office and the den, crossing the front hallway, her eyes darting to the small glass window in the door as if seeing Ana and Reinhardt walking up the front stairs was a liferaft in her current sea of panic.

She nearly jumped out of her skin when two warm hands dropped to her shoulders, halting her movements. "There's no reason to be nervous, ya amar. They will be ecstatic." A kiss against her neck and her wife was hugging her from behind, hands resting gently over the barely swollen belly. Surrounded by warmth and Fareeha's scent of sandalwood, Angela finally relaxed with a smile. "Now go and sit, pacing won't make them arrive faster." And with that, Angela was nudged in the direction of the den, grinning as she noticed her favorite throw and book already waiting on her.

Fareeha smiled to herself as Angela settled on the couch, standing in the doorway just a bit longer to watch the blonde before heading back to the kitchen to finish the meal.

The food was just hitting the table when the knock sounded through the house. Fareeha released a calming breath; Angela shot to her feet in a panic. They arrived at the front door together, Fareeha reaching forward to pull it open to reveal the elder couple. Smiles and hugs were exchanged and they made their way to the kitchen table and their meal. Pleasantries were passed along with platters and bowls of food and before long, plates were being scraped clean with compliments tossed to Fareeha. Ana made to stand but Fareeha caught her wrist with a smile.

"But we still have dessert, ami." And with that, Fareeha stood and cleared away a few plates before moving to the sink. Behind her, Angela was already at the oven and pulling it open. All eyes turned to the oven waiting for one of Angela's famous baked concoctions, but all that sat on the rack was a single roll of bread.

At the sink, Fareeha chewed her lip to hold back her laughter as Angela bent over with an exaggerated expression of shock, the pilot suddenly appreciating her wife more as a scientist for she would have made a terrible actress. “Oh, what’s this?” Angela said, still in her act of surprise.

Fareeha took her queue, bringing the pie they’d hidden under a towel to the table. “I would say, Angela,” She placed the dessert on the table with a smirk. “That we have a bun in the oven.”

The only silver lining to their shopping trip was Hana and Lena’s insistence that they be the ones to carry the obscene amount of bags. They’d already made their way through three stores and were now shuffling through the crowded mall with the determination of an Everest climber. Angela was beginning to dread the next excited squeal from the Korean as she spotted something the “new babybird just needed to have.” She hated herself just a bit when she rolled her eyes as Lena began reading from the list she’d made before they left on their journey.

“Let’s see, right... Ok, so we’ve got furniture covered, Fareeha’s handling that.” She struggled to bring a bag-laden arm up to cross the item from the paper. “Baby clothes, check. Toys, check. That silly picture thing Hana made you buy, added and check. We’ve got your clothes for when you get fat. Oi, it happens!” Lena defended when Angela moved to swat at her shoulder, skipping to the side to avoid the hit.

“Lena, we’ve bought enough to start our own store at this point, can we just go home?” Angela wasn’t one to beg or whine, but her back was killing her, her feet felt like lead and she was nursing a headache. That’s when Hana began cooing over something in the window they’d just passed.

Angela sighed, shoulders slumping. *It’s going to be a long day.* She groaned, hand rubbing at the bridge of her nose.

Angela sat on the couch, feet folded beneath her for added warmth as her toes were always frigid now. She balanced a book on her knee and a notepad against the other, jotting notes down as she flipped through the pages. Fareeha walked into the den and Angela stopped her with a raised finger, finishing her thought on paper before turning to look at her wife in the doorway.

“So I was thinking something to represent our heritage,” Fareeha spoke once she had her wife’s attention. “Something that would represent the best parts of us and where we came from.” Fareeha moved to sit on the couch, arm slung over the back, fingers playing with blonde tendrils.

“I was thinking the same! I have a list,” She picked up her notebook and held it toward the Egyptian with a proud smile. “Of names I’d like us to pick from.” Umber eyes scanned over the list of names and meanings scribbled across the page. The decidedly Swiss names.

Fareeha sighed, hand stilling its motions. “I was actually thinking of Kamaj. It is ‘one who protects the innocent.’” Fareeha looked over the list again, seeing a doodled heart next to ‘Ansel’ with its meaning to the side.

A sniff from the blonde drew umber eyes over. Angela was shaking her head and wiping at her eyes frantically. “I’m sorry, I’m really not upset I promise.” Fareeha’s hand dropped to comfortingly massage Angela’s neck. “It’s these damn hormones.”

Fareeha used the hand at her wife’s neck to tug her sideways, other arm wedging beneath her thighs. She deftly pulled the blonde into her lap with a shushing hum, hooking her chin over blonde locks and rocking slightly. Angela’s sniffs began to soften as she lay with her ear against her wife’s chest, reveling in the strong heartbeat and steady breaths. Fareeha’s voice was a deep rumble against her cheek when she spoke.

“Let’s compromise then.” A dark hand smoothed over Angela’s back. “I’ll pick an Arabic first name and a Swiss middle name. You do the opposite and then we can decide.” She dropped a kiss onto the top of her wife’s head. “How does that sound?”

“Perfect.” Angela hummed.

Three days later found them in the den once more, each with their own notebook. Angela spoke first, excitedly leaning forward with her elbows on her knees as she sat cross-legged on the couch. “Ansel Rashad. Ansel meaning holy protection and Rashad meaning intelligence and pathfinding.” Fareeha’s eyes began to glisten with unshed tears as her gaze shifted from her wife’s excited face to the small bump at her waist.

She swallowed thickly and rapidly blinked her eyes at her paper to clear away the tears before she read hers aloud. “Kamaj Falke.” A small sound of surprise from her wife had her looking up from her page but Angela motioned for her to continue. “Kamaj means protection of the innocent and Falke means flight.” Angela was turning red in the face now trying to hold back her laughter. At Fareeha’s questioning glance, her wife merely shook her head. Once the blonde calmed down, she spoke.

“Falke means falconer.” The silence was deafening. “You, who piloted a blue metal falcon suit,

wants to name our son after someone who raises falcons.”

Fareeha only grinned. “That just makes it even better.”

“Angela are you dressed yet?” Fareeha called through the house as she made her way to their bedroom. As she passed under the stairway, she heard a thump on the ceiling above her. Concerned, though it didn’t sound loud enough to have been her wife falling, she turned and sprinted up the stairs taking them three at a time. She shot to the room they were converting to Angela’s new office when she heard muttered Swiss from the doorway. Fareeha leaned against the doorframe, arms crossed and a small smile on her lips as she watched her wife on her hands and knees, scrubbing the nonexistent dust from the bottom shelves of her bookcase.

“Ya amar,” Fareeha spoke softly to not spook her wife. “We’re supposed to meet Mei and Aleks in about an hour, can I help with anything?” Angela’s only response was to burst into tears. Fareeha was at Angela’s side in two quick strides, dropping to a knee and pulling her into her arms. The sobs grew louder but Fareeha held on, humming a small tune. Since she’d hit this stage of her pregnancy, her emotions were on a pendulum and Fareeha had learned that no matter which side of the swing her mood landed on, a bit of a cuddle turned things around. The pair sat on the floor of Angela’s new office until the blonde had calmed enough for Fareeha to stand with Angela in her arms. She made her way carefully down the stairs and turned toward their bedroom, nudging the door open with a toe.

Once Angela was in the bed Fareeha went about gathering some comfortable sleepwear while flipping through her phone to call Aleks. With the phone nestled between her ear and shoulder, she helped Angela redress into a tank and shorts, explaining their need to cancel when the Russian answered. Fareeha hung up and tossed her phone onto her nightstand before crawling under the covers and pulling Angela toward her.

Angela decided she was done with any bit of her current situation. Fareeha, however, could not be happier. She’d follow the waddling Angela around with a dopey grin on her face and the coddling was getting to the doctor. It was a few days into the second trimester when the blonde finally snapped.

Angela had just entered the kitchen for something to curb her hunger when in trotted her Egyptian wife. The ex-pilot took in the sight of her wife in sinfully tiny shorts and oversized tee that barely kept its stretched out neck on her body. Angela was trying to reach up for her go-to box of cereal when Fareeha’s mocha hand grabbed it first, placing it on the counter and a kiss to Angela’s bare shoulder. When Fareeha moved to the fridge for the milk, Angela nearly growled.

“Fareeha.” Came the cold tone, stopping the woman in her tracks. “I am perfectly capable of making myself a bowl of cereal.”

A pout, an honest to goodness pout, bloomed over Fareeha’s full lips. Angela looked away before the puppy eyes started. “I’m just trying to help you, ya amar.”

“Just... Sit down and let me do at least this.” Angela said, shoulders drooping in defeat.

Fareeha drew the hem of her tank up to wipe away the sweat from her forehead as she stood from her latest task of building a changing table. Angela sat in the rocking chair in the corner, folding clothes and sorting them into drawers and at her wife’s movement she froze, eyes catching on the defined abs peeking from beneath the raised shirt. She bit her lip as her eyes roamed over glistening skin. Fareeha caught her staring and tightened her stomach, flexing her sweat-wiping arm for good measure. She smirked when she saw Angela thickly swallow.

The heated moment broke when Angela gasped, hand flying to her stomach. “Fareeha!” The grin was huge on Angela’s face as she waved her wife over. “He’s kicking! Come feel!” As soon as the dark hand was close enough, pale fingers gripped at it and tugged it to her stomach. Fareeha sank to her knees, nestled between Angela’s thighs, palm pressed against the warm skin. Her smile was soft and gentle, eyes full of wonder as she felt the small thump against her hand. As if under a spell, she pushed Angela’s shirt up and leaned forward to rain kisses over the stretched skin.

Angela sat grinning as she watched her wife whisper sweet nothings to her belly. Umber eyes darted up to catch her gaze through dark lashes and her breath caught. Fareeha’s whispered word made her heart flutter.

“Ours.” And then there was a cheek pressed against pale flesh.

“Alright, are you two ready to see your baby?” The nurse sat behind the monitor, one hand stretched out to work the sensor running along Angela’s expanded stomach. Fareeha’s hand tightened in her own and she nodded. While this wouldn’t be their first ultrasound, it’d be the first where they were learning anything about their child other than health. Fareeha had been insistent

that every doctor's visit be made and shown up to, every vitamin taken, the wrong foods thrown out and everything completed to a textbook level.

They'd chosen to wait to learn the sex of the baby until now, two months out from their due date. Fareeha thought it would be a nice surprise; Angela was worried she'd get even more attached if she knew and the haunting fear that she was going to lose their child would take over.

Angela's heart skipped a beat as the nurse's brows furrowed and she moved the sensor to a specific area. "What's wrong," Angela demanded, propping herself onto her elbows to try and snag a glimpse of the monitor. The nurse's face immediately reshuffled into a smile as she turned.

"Oh nothing at all, Mrs. Amari. I was just checking." The nurse turned the monitor to face the couple. "You have a very healthy boy." She hit a button to capture the image before moving the sensor back to the position that made her brows furrow. The image swished around for a moment before focusing on their son. "And here's your other healthy boy."

Angela's jaw dropped, eyes moving to her gel covered stomach. A dark hand moved to smooth over the skin and her eyes locked with Fareeha's. "T-twins?" The blonde asked.

The Boys are Here

There was a quiet knock at the door before it was pushed open, a small accented 'hello' called out as Ana stepped into the room. Angela lay on the bed asleep with Fareeha next to her in a chair, leg tossed over the wooden armrest. She laid down the tablet she was working on and smiled up at her mother as the ex-sniper pulled up a chair. A small hand closed over Fareeha's own and gave it a comforting squeeze.

"She's still out?" Ana asked in a whisper, nodding her head toward the blonde.

Fareeha nodded and glanced at the tablet, saving the work on her recent coding and shutting it down with a small sigh. "It was rough." For a moment, Ana thought this was the only explanation she was going to get from her daughter. Fareeha pulled herself to her feet and leaned over her sleeping wife, dark fingers pushing sweat clumped bangs from her forehead and double checking IVs and blankets. When she completed her routine she turned back to her mother and motioned for her to follow as she left the room.

"The nanites she infused herself with back in the Overwatch days," Fareeha began once the door was pulled shut, "Caused issues during labor. They kept healing any damage done, so it ended in surgery." A dark hand pushed through black tresses as Fareeha leaned against the wall, head dropping back to rest tiredly against the surface. "Both of the boys are healthy and Angela's recovering well." She said as a reassurance to her mother, but Ana knew the words were for the new parent herself.

Fareeha pushed away from the wall to dig her phone from her back pocket, thumbing through commands and typing a quick text. "I'm going to have Lena come up from the cafeteria to sit with her. We'll go see the boys as soon as she's here."

Ana nodded, eyes drifting to the small window leading to Angela's room. Seeing the strong and fearless doctor as she was now, more pale and papery than ever, she could understand why her daughter was nervous to leave her alone. No more than a few seconds after the text was sent, Lena appeared in a flash already shoving Fareeha toward her mother.

"You two go on, I've got DocWatch." The Brit said with a salute, shooing the pair toward the nursery.

Ana chuckled and took the lead, easily navigating through the hallways with the help of bright blue placards. "So I take it your earlier argument with Angela over naming isn't an issue now?" The older woman asked, smile heavy in her voice.

Fareeha only sighed and rolled her eyes. "I wondered how long it would take you to bring that up, ami." Fareeha stepped up to the glass door and pressed the buzzer, waiting as a short round nurse nearly skipped to the door to allow them in. The nurse tutted over the boys as she lead the Amaris to twin bundles at the far end of the room. Fareeha stood back, a look of pride on her face as Ana stepped forward and gently traced her fingers over the forehead and nose of each baby, words of prayer on her lips.

Brown eyes snapped open at the sharp wail and before the child could take a breath to continue his screaming, Fareeha was standing from the bed, arm stretched behind to wave off Angela as she woke as well. "You stay, I'll get this one," Fareeha said through a yawn, wiping at her tired face as she made her way to the bassinet in the corner of the master bedroom. She'd woken with them each time for the past four nights as Angela was still weak after her ordeal. It was a price Fareeha was more than willing to pay to have all of her family happy and healthy.

Well, mostly happy if the cries from her youngest were anything to go by. She gathered the crying bundle into her arms, rocking him against her chest. "*La tabaki*, Ansel." The words were whispered into fine black hair as she fumbled to pick up a fleece blanket from the dresser, wrapping it around the tiny form. When he'd calmed slightly, she made her way down the hallway to the kitchen and one of the prepared bottles Angela had made earlier that day. She finished warming it and sat on a kitchen chair, teasing his lower lip with the bottle so he'd start to feed. Once he'd latched, she leaned back, eyes lovingly locked on her son.

"Okay, this just ain't right. Is this-" The words were cut off by a wet cough and clearing of the throat. "What are you feedin' these kids?"

Angela stood to the side with her hand plastered over her mouth to muffle the laughter as she watched Jesse attempt to clean the squirming baby. He'd make a small swipe at dirty skin but would quickly withdraw to gag, square his shoulders and then try once more. After a few rotations, he finally threw down the wet wipe in defeat.

"Yeah no, thain't no way I'm doin' that again." He stepped back to allow the blonde room to work and she quickly had Kamaj cleaned and diapered once more.

"It'll get easier with practice, Jesse." She gave him a reassuring pat and gestured at the boy on the changing table. Jesse reached forward and scooped him up carefully, chuckling when tiny hands came up to scratch against his stubble.

A startling yelp echoed through the house and Fareeha was off and running to the office turned nursery. She sight she was met with left her torn, should she laugh? Cry? Record the moment for later? A broken sound from her wife settled the matter and Fareeha was moving forward, stopping beside the changing table with a naked Ansel and her soaked wife.

Two baby wipes were deftly pulled from the tub and dark hands wiped down Angela's face and neck, cleaning her from the boy's accident. Angela's wet shirt was tugged over her head and her chest and stomach wiped down.

Fareeha kissed Angela's temple after discretely checking it for urine and nudged the blonde toward the door. "Go take a shower, I'll finish up here." Angela made to leave, turning back to look at the Egyptian as she quickly finished up the diaper change. She grinned to herself and left, heading quickly for a very hot shower.

As soon as Fareeha heard the bedroom door shut, she burst into laughter.

To say that Angela was overprotective of her boys was an understatement. They were nowhere near crawling, but every safety device had been installed in the house. Detergents and soaps and cleaners all needed analysis in her home lab before they were used. Checkups were routine and she logged any irregularities as if she were writing a thesis on her children.

Thus she was acutely aware of the moment Kamaj's cough started.

She paced in the nursery, one hand twisting a lock of hair that had fallen from the messy bun she'd thrown her hair into. Her mind raced through possible causes, croup, pneumonia, bronchiolitis, allergies... Her thoughts went to remedies, medicines, nanites? She'd never tested nanites on anyone younger than seven and she sure as hell wasn't going to use her son as a lab rat. Her heart skipped a beat as Kamaj coughed again.

As if summoned by her stress, Fareeha popped her head in, an announcement of dinner dying on her lips. She moved forward and caught Angela mid-pace, wrapping strong arms around her fretting wife as she mumbled about her fears of a fatally ill child. Fareeha caught Angela's face between gentle hands, forcing her to make eye contact.

“Ya amar, you are a doctor.” A tap of finger against temple. “Use that huge brain in there like one instead of a new mother. What are his symptoms? What deductions can you make regarding his health?”

The blonde nodded with a sigh. “You’re right.”

The flash of a camera lit the room for a moment as the two mothers stood by the crib, quietly laughing as they documented the scene before them. The boys lay in their crib, heads at each other’s feet. Ansel slept with his arms spread wide, foot kicking as he dreamed.

Kamaj lay with his arms wrapped tight around his brother’s calf, tugging his foot against his face.

A lot of Firsts

Angela and Fareeha sat cross-legged, knees touching as they faced each other on the den floor still clad in sleepwear. They each had a boy on their calves, thumbs clenched in tiny fists as the brothers leaned on each other's backs for support. The twins were cackling like mad at their mothers' silly faces as they capitalized on the newest development in the Amari household: first laughs.

Angela rolled over with a groan, arm flinging to the side and smacking into a very asleep Fareeha with a dull thud. The ex-pilot shot awake and on instinct flung herself over her wife, eyes shooting to the crib to check on the boys. A calming hand swept over her back as Angela chuckled behind her. Fareeha shifted her gaze to the blonde as she lay against the pillows, face illuminated by the small nightlight by the boys' bed. Angela raised a finger to her lips and gestured to the crib and that's when Fareeha heard it.

Brown eyes locked on the crib, more specifically the two boys sprawled out on their sides facing each other, babbling in a heated conversation. A small grin took over Fareeha's sleepy face and she laid back down, scooping an arm under Angela and they sat there, listening with grins on their faces as their boys took their time conversing.

Angela sat at the table between the highchairs, entertaining the boys as Fareeha stood at the stove tending to their morning breakfast. The blonde was making a game of their morning snack as she lightly flicked their strawberry puffs around the tray, trying to entice the boys to feed themselves.

Kamaj's tiny fist slammed down, crushing the puff, but his bright blue eyes locked on Angela's with a sense of triumph and the game was on. Tiny fists rained down on the helpless puffs, grinding them to dust, Kamaj cackling with glee.

A chuckle from Fareeha drew her attention to the Egyptian as she stood with her back to the stove, eyes locked on Ansel. She followed her gaze and was surprised to see Ansel calmly shoving a strawberry puff into his mouth, fingers along with it. He chewed happily and smiled up at Fareeha over pudgy cheeks, finger still in his mouth.

Fareeha stumbled from bed, glaring at the harsh sunlight streaming between the curtains as she made her way to the nursery. As she approached the door she heard a string of babbling and she poked her head inside, breath catching as she saw Angela laying back on the floor, Kamaj sitting on her stomach and Ansel draped over her shoulder, head resting on her chest.

Kamaj had a huge grin on his face as he stared at the blonde, awe and wonder on his tiny face as he garbled, “-Ami mimim amimi!”

Fareeha wanted to shout in happiness but carefully made her way to Angela and sat, silent as to not break the moment. She picked up the sleepy Ansel and held him up to her face, nose brushing playfully against his. “Alright, your turn Ansel. Say ‘mama.’” She sounded the word out a few more times for him, lips over exaggerating the movements and when he took a breath, both mothers held theirs.

With a huge grin, Ansel blew a raspberry that ended in a squeal of glee. Fareeha chuckled and dropped a kiss on his forehead. “That’s good enough, but you better eventually call me something that’s easier to pronounce.”

The mothers found themselves in their usual family time place: the floor in the den. Kamaj lay on the couch to their side completely asleep, worn out from their day at the park. Ansel was in front of Angela, hands clenched around her fingers as he stood bouncing, stretching and working his legs. He confidently babbled something to her and she grinned, blinking back tears. It was times like this that she saw so much of Fareeha in her youngest boy. There was no doubt in her mind that Ansel had just spouted off some boasting phrase about his ability to stand.

“Alright then, Mr. Amari. Let’s see what you’ve got, hmm?” She picked him up and turned him, setting him back to his feet and Fareeha’s hands were instantly out, used to this routine. They’d been trying to encourage the boys to walk for a while now and Kamaj had taken to it quickly, taking his first and only step two days prior. He’d sat and watched Ansel who’d refused to try and since, Kamaj hadn’t taken another step on his own.

Fareeha gave her fingers a wiggle, huge smile on her face as she waved her boy over. Angela moved her hands forward to encourage Ansel to move and he nearly fell forward but a pudgy leg shot out before he could fall. Both mothers held their breath as his other foot shuffled forward. Angela pulled one finger away and he took another step, the blonde rocking forward onto her knees to keep him supported, ecstatic grin on her face as she locked eyes with Fareeha.

“There you go, little bird, one more and I’ve got you,” Fareeha said as her hands moved toward the floor ready to catch him should he fall and she nodded to Angela. The blonde pulled her finger

from Ansel's fist and dropped her hands to hover just over his waist as he took one final step completely on his own.

Angela swept into the kitchen arms laden with bags from the store with a shout to Fareeha to help her put the groceries away. When she didn't hear the ex-soldier's heavy steps she made her way to the nursery but found it empty. Concerned, she began her search in the second most obvious place and found her wife and boys sprawled on the den floor and as soon as she took in their activity, she began to scold her wife.

"No! Absolutely not, they're too young for that." Angela said as she stepped forward, finger pointing at the tablet keeping Kamaj entertained. At Fareeha's side, Ansel began up a chant of 'no no no' and Fareeha grinned.

"Ya amar, it's a game made for developing minds, it helps with hand-eye coordination." She pointed to the tablet's screen and the small birds flitting over its surface, disappearing as Kamaj's tiny fist made contact.

"I don't want to be the mothers that give their children electronics to keep them distracted," Angela said, already seeing the change in her wife's expression and trailing her words to silence, dropping to sit at Fareeha's side. "That's a silly worry, isn't it?"

Fareeha leaned over and bumped shoulders with Angela, head dropping to rest against blonde hair and nodding.

Fareeha flitted around the house, arms already full of supplies but still trying to grab more. Angela followed behind at a steady pace, calmly picking up the items dropped by her wife. When Fareeha tried to nudge a large bottle of baby powder from the shelf, Angela stepped in and snatched it up with a click of her tongue.

"Liebe, we have plenty. It's only a few hours, we don't need to pack everything." Fareeha turned to look at her like she'd grown a second head and the moment stretched out until Angela reached forward and began plucking stuffed animals and extra shoes from Fareeha's arms. "Let's get this to a more manageable state and then we can leave, yes? You get the boys, I'll finish up here."

Without waiting for an answer, Angela turned and made her way to the diaper bag and double

checked it for the items they truly needed. She nodded to herself as she zipped it up with a sense of finality and slung it over her shoulder. She turned and watched as Fareeha knelt in front of the stroller, strapping a squirming Kamaj into his seat, Ansel to his left calm and curious. Angela moved to the door and held it open as Fareeha pushed the twins out the door for their first birthday party.

Chapter 6

A delighted squeal rang through the house before a wet thud echoed along with it. Angela looked up from her perch in the reading nook in their bedroom just in time to see a very wet and naked Ansel totter from the bathroom followed by an equally soaked Fareeha. The tiny body slammed into Angela's knees with a giggle as he ran from his mother.

Blue eyes darted to the open bathroom door just as Kamaj made his escape, his plan involving a quick dash down the hallway. Amused blue eyes met brown. "I told you Fareeha, you need help."

Fareeha's only response was an exaggerated pout as she turned to chase down Kamaj.

Angela stepped out of the bathroom, vigorously rubbing at her wet hair with a towel. She bit back a yawn as she made her way down the hallway toward the kitchen to begin breakfast. She could hear the boys chattering away in the den with Fareeha's throaty chuckle mixed in and she smiled. Her eyes trailed over the framed photos along the hallway, stopping to admire family and baby photos. A pale hand came up to stroke along the glass as she froze in front of her favorite: Angela kneeling with a very obvious swell to her stomach, Fareeha behind her and all four hands and eyes on her protruding tummy. She grinned and turned to finish her trek to the den.

She stopped in her tracks as her eyes spotted a new bit of artwork on the wall. Angela heaved a sigh with her hands on her hips. "Ansel Rashad Amari." She called, voice raised only enough to be heard in the den. "You get your butt in here right now." The moment she registered what she'd said, her hand slapped over her forehead.

As expected, the chant of "butt, butt, butt" started up as their youngest son toddled into the hall, huge grin on his face. Behind him, Fareeha's head popped out of the doorway as she lay on the floor with Kamaj, trying her best to hold back her laughter.

Angela knelt next to the large scribble of crayon on the wall and held her hand out toward Ansel. The boy stepped up to her and she sat him on her knee, facing the wall. "Ansel, I really love when you draw pictures, but if you put them on the wall, we have to clean them off."

"And then mami gets sad," Fareeha piped up from the floor, drawing Ansel's eyes. "Because she wants to keep them forever." Brown eyes connected with Angela's over Ansel's mop of wavy black hair.

Angela nodded when the boy's attention shifted back to her. "So if we put it on paper, I can keep

them. So let's clean this up and get something to draw on, okay?"

Ansel nodded though both mothers knew he was oblivious, only eager to please.

Angela pulled her sun hat down further onto her head as the breeze picked up. She squinted out over the playground, even her sunglasses and the tree she hid under did nothing for the harsh brightness. She smiled as she watched Fareeha and Kamaj play in the massive sandbox, the boy giggling as he kicked a chubby foot through a pile of sand. Her gaze shifted down to the boy in her lap, sound asleep. She brushed a few stray strands of black hair from his face and returned to her book with a smile.

"Boys, come here!" Fareeha called from the kitchen, her summons answered with a swift patter of feet as the twins ran to their mother. Angela sat at the kitchen counter with a mug of tea between her hands, laughing as Ansel cried out 'eat?' as he scampered into the room ahead of his brother.

"No Ansel, it's not time to eat just yet." Angela said through a laugh. Fareeha sat in the doorframe reserved for growth charts, a bright orange poster stuck to the wall next to her. The twins approached and she tapped the floor in front of her to encourage them to sit as Angela dropped from her stool to sit next to them. "This," Fareeha started, pointing to the poster on the wall, "Is our chore chart." She went on to point out the cut out faces of the boys and both mothers, along with the chore pictures that lined the top edge.

"Every time you help, you'll get a sticker." Angela spoke up, showing the boys the shiny sheet of stickers. "If you fill all of your squares with stickers, you'll get a prize!" She stretched her face into an overly excited grin to lead the boys into their own excitement over the new chore chart.

"Help! Mama! Help! Mama!" Kamaj chanted as he toddled around the family room, cup clutched between his elbow and side. He'd stop above a fallen crayon, bend at the waist and after a few missed swipes, would successfully get it in a chubby fist. With a look of pride, he dropped the crayon into the cup held at his side. Kamaj looked up with a grin of joy at Fareeha who was carefully stacking drawn on papers into a pile. She returned his smile with her own, words of praise given freely. His smile grew even bigger and he made his way to the next fallen crayon but as he bent, the one he'd stored in the cup fell to the floor.

Fareeha watched as the boy turned it into a silly game, smiling and relaxing into a giant bean bag chair.

“Look ‘Reeha, I’m sorry, alright?” Jesse sat at the kitchen counter, head hung between balled fists. Fareeha stood against the far counter, leaning back against the marble, palms braced on the edge and her ankles crossed. Dark amber eyes glared holes into the top of Jesse’s head as he sat moping at the counter.

“So you’re going with ‘sorry,’ is that it?” The ex-pilot’s voice was sharp, a harsh commanding tone she’d all but abandoned since the birth of her boys. “You realize if Angela finds out about this, ‘sorry’ is the last thing she’ll want to hear.”

A sigh from the cowboy. “I know! I fu-”

Fareeha pushed off from the counter with a growl. “That’s exactly why we’re here, Jess.” She sighed and leaned against the counter next to him, bracing herself on her elbows. “My two year old said ‘fuck’ today. What are we supposed to do with that, hm?” Jesse took a breath to respond though he knew the question was rhetorical. Fareeha gave him a firm punch to his upper arm as she stood. “You get to have that talk with him.” She pointed toward the family room, eyebrows raised expectantly.

He sighed and stood from his seat and sauntered to the den, hands stuffed into his pockets. “Kamaj, c’mere.” He said as he reached the doorway, hand held out for the boy. “We’ve gotta have a little talk.” When a tiny hand wrapped around his finger, Jesse lead the boy down the hall to the privacy of the master bedroom.

He dropped to a knee in front of Kamaj and sighed. “Look kiddo, sometimes grownups say things that they shouldn’t. Like uh...” He paused, pushing a hand through his shaggy hair. “Your mom would kill me if I gave you more vocab...” He muttered to himself before trying his speech again. “Just... If you hear a new word, ask your mama about it, okay? Don’t yell it at the store okay?”

Angela flopped onto the bed exhausted. She rolled to her side with a groan when she landed on something hard. She fell to her side, hand already digging for the offending object. Fareeha came out of the bathroom just as the blonde was tugging a plastic cup from beneath the blankets. Her face pulled into a grimace as she looked inside.

“Oh I see he left another one.” Fareeha mused as she moved to Angela’s side of the bed, hand stretched out for the crayon-goo filled cup. "He really wants to earn his stickers, but apparently all that cleaning makes him super hungry." The blonde passed over the cup eagerly before standing and heading to the bathroom for a long, hot handwashing.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“They love Jesse and Hanzo, this will be no problem. Just let Aleks show off and Mei will without a doubt go on and on about their extended deployment, we’re golden.” Fareeha spoke as she pulled a shirt over her head. Angela sat cross-legged on the unmade bed, fiddling with a crinkle in the sheet as she watched her wife dress. The Egyptian smoothed her shirt as she walked to the bed, bending at the waist to drop a chaste kiss on her wife’s lips. “It’ll be fine. Now let’s go, they’ll be here soon.”

Angela nodded and took Fareeha’s hand as she held it out, pulling herself from the bed with a grin. “I suppose it *is* silly of me to be nervous.”

Fareeha gave her a bright smile, eyes crinkling at the corners, the only sign of her age. “No, it’s a big step. Jess and Hanzo have been around since they were babies, Aleks and Mei are their first new people.” Fareeha tugged at the pale hand still held in hers, drawing Angela into a hug. “But you can’t be nervous when we go out there. They’ll pick up on it and we won’t recover.” She gave a squeeze before pulling away and heading to the family room.

Angela heaved a calming sigh before leaving the bedroom and making her way to the kitchen to put the finishing touches on dinner. She’d decided on a simple meal that the boys would be comfortable with: breaded chicken, green beans, and cheesy rice. Mei and Aleks would be fine with anything and she’d rather cater to the twins if this was already going to be a trying experience for them.

A knock at the door and both boys were running to it, giggling out cries of “Uncle Dess!” and “Hano!” Both mothers were right on their heels, Fareeha scooping them each up in an arm and stepping to the side as Angela reached forward to open the door. As soon as the boys saw the smiling, pink haired giant and the small woman who were clearly not their beloved godfathers, they buried their faces in their mother’s neck.

Aleks visibly wilted but Mei skipped right on inside with a huge grin, determined to keep up her spirits.

A shrill screech echoed through the house as Kamaj and Ansel came running down the hallway away from the boys’ room. Fareeha looked up from her seat on the couch in time to see a stark white three-year-old run into the kitchen to Angela. With a sigh she saved her work and stood, heading for the disaster she was sure she’d find.

She bypassed the kitchen completely and went straight to the nursery, jaw dropping as she took in the mess. Her children were ninjas. That was the only explanation for how they'd managed to cover their room in a mixture of diaper rash cream and baby powder. Silently.

A mocha hand came up to cover her mouth as she took in the full scope of the damage. It was time for an update to their room anyway but this was not how she wanted to kick off the renovations. With a deep sigh that nearly sent her coughing from the powder in the air, she turned and made her way to the broom closet for the vacuum.

She gave a smile to Angela as she stood in the kitchen, both boys sat before her on the counter getting a firm lecture and a warm cloth. Fareeha returned to the war zone and began cleaning up, contemplating better places to hide the unused toiletries to avoid further incidents while she worked.

It was rare these days that Angela had to physically go into work as most of her duties were done from home, but on the days that she was needed for lectures or training, Fareeha did her best to entertain the boys. Her current distraction was a field trip to the local aquarium.

She and Hanzo were strolling through the darkened freshwater exhibit with a boy each on their shoulders, small hands fisted in hair for balance and in Ansel's case: steering. To Hanzo's credit, he took the tugs at his hair in stride, changing his direction at each excited pull. Grins were on all four faces as they made their way to the alligator pond, the boys pressing against the thick glass for a better look. A chubby finger jabbed at the barrier.

"Uncle Hano, why dey in dere?" Ansel asked, eyes glaring at the murky water.

"They live mostly in the water but they come onto land when needed." The Japanese man explained.

"Why dey needed?" The small boy asked again. Fareeha bit her lip to quiet her laughter as she took a small step back out of the man's eyesight.

Hanzo, however, seemed completely oblivious to his fate. "To eat, hunt or sun themselves."

“Why dey no eat dere?” Ansel asked again, jabbing at the glass once more.

“They can and sometimes do.”

“Why?”

Ansel sank a few inches as Hanzo heaved a heavy sigh. “Because they do, musuko.”

“But why?” Fareeha asked through deep chuckles, earning a glare from Hanzo.

Fareeha closed the garage door behind her and jiggled the handle to ensure it’s lock held before dropping her greasy towel into the ‘garage only’ hamper. She pulled the laundry room door closed for good measure and smiled as she smelled gingersnaps cooking in the kitchen.

She poked her head in the doorway, ready for a quick banter with her wife before she hopped in the shower, but all words died in her throat as she took in the scene.

Angela sat at the table with a boy on each side, books and papers spread out on the table as she coached them through basic math. They boys had been counting and saying their alphabet nearly since they could string words together and it seemed Angela was intent on getting them as far ahead as she could.

Umber eyes took in her boys with a slight bit of concern; Angela was known to go a bit overboard when she was focused on the children’s futures. Kamaj sat with a crayon clutched in his fist and a determined look on his face as he tried to follow the dotted lines forming numbers on his sheet of paper. Ansel was staring at Angela with a look of reverence, finger in the side of his mouth. A chubby finger moved between Angela’s two upheld index fingers as he excitedly counted.

Fareeha grinned out a sigh, shaking her head as she made her way to the shower, small laughs following her.

Angela wasn't sure what to expect when Kamaj demanded he dress himself before the small get together at Jesse and Hanzo's. She did know that nothing could have prepared her for what she saw when she entered the boys' room. Ansel sat quietly on his small toddler bed, chin resting on the plush toy held in his lap, bright blue eyes locked on his brother.

Kamaj stood in front of the wall mounted mirror in Fareeha's combat boots, some tiny scrap of a skirt Lena had convinced Angela to wear at some point, a lime green tank top and Fareeha's sunglasses. Angela slapped a hand to her mouth, determined not to let her son think she was laughing at him. He looked up with a full faced grin, eyes glittering with pride.

"Mami! I ready!"

"That you are, little bird!" Angela said, holding out a hand to her son, spinning him when he clutched her fingers. "You'll be one of the most dashing little boys there." She shot a grin to Ansel. "You two will be the talk of the party."

Fareeha was lounging in the den, curled up on the plush couch with her tablet balanced on her knee as she finished up a coding project. Cramped arms pulled above her head in a long stretch as she arched her neck to get a read on the wall clock. She had time to finish up dinner before Angela returned from her conference.

With a determined nod, she pushed herself from the couch and made her way to the kitchen, mentally listing off things she could have prepared and waiting on the table for her wife.

She was just closing the oven with her hip as she set the timer when Ansel shuffled into the room. "Mama I sleepy." He mumbled, tiredly rubbing at his eye.

"Well hello, Mr. Sleepy," She said with a grin. "I'm mama."

Angela checked the boys' room for a third time as Fareeha searched the other end of the house. What had started as a game of hide and seek had quickly derailed when they couldn't find Kamaj. The boy's usual idea of a great hiding spot is partially behind something with his hand slapped over his eyes, so his disappearing act was quite unexpected.

The blonde was heading toward the kitchen when she heard Fareeha's shout. Her heart leaped into her throat as she raced toward her wife's voice but when she heard the deep chuckles she slowed and allowed herself to calm. Fareeha was standing at the door to the hallway bathroom trying her hardest to contain any more laughter. When Angela stepped up to her side, she was hard pressed to keep her giggles to herself.

Kamaj sat fully in the toilet, knees at his ears as his bottom was undoubtedly in the cold water. His face was set in a glare as he watched his mothers stand there and do nothing to help him.

In his anger, he kicked his feet but it only resulted in a more comical scene and both mothers broke into loud peals of laughter.

"Mami!" Came Kamaj's frightened yelp from the boys' room. Within moments Angela was whipping through the door, hand braced on the frame for leverage. Her son stood in the middle of the room completely naked, staring wide-eyed at his crotch. "It awake!" He said, giving a prod between his legs.

Angela quietly sighed and stepped to the dresser, pulling out a pair of underwear and sleep pants. She dropped to a knee in front of Kamaj and helped him dress as she spoke. "Yes, viene. Sometimes it will be awake."

"It need sleep." He said matter-of-factly with a firm nod and jutted lip.

Angela chuckled as she tugged the waistband of his pants into place. "It will, Kamaj, it'll go to sleep soon, okay?"

Chapter End Notes

Very sorry about the delay on this one. There's a lot of stuff going on where I work and I've been doing weird shifts.

Chapter 8

Angela sat in the stiff chair, back rigidly straight and knee bouncing as blue eyes darted around the clinic's waiting room. A warm hand settled over her pale fingers as they dug into her skirt and Fareeha's calm washed over her immediately.

"No getting ahead of ourselves this time, okay?" Angela said as her nerves began to calm. Fareeha only chuckled as it was not lost on her that her wife's words were not a reminder for the Egyptian. She gave a tight squeeze to Angela's fingers as she continued to read the parenting magazine on her thigh. Angela huffed out a sigh as her head dropped to Fareeha's shoulder.

"One try," Fareeha said quietly as she turned to drop a kiss among white-blond bangs. Angela turned her hand under Fareeha's, threading their fingers together and gripping tightly. She nodded.

The door opened and a nurse poked her head inside the small waiting room. "Angela Amari?"

Angela shot to her feet, nerves once more taking hold. Behind her, Fareeha calmly stood and dropped her magazine to the table before wrapping an arm around her shaking wife and leading her to their appointment with Dr. Harper.

The scuffle of tiny feet joined the sniffing and coughing in the dark room. Fareeha had been feeling under the weather for a while but had finally succumbed. Angela swore she wasn't contagious, Fareeha supposed it'd be difficult to transfer utter death. She sat under a mound of blankets in the middle of the bed, television softly playing in the background. Her blank stare moved from the infomercial to the mop of wavy black hair barely visible over the fluffed up comforter. She smiled as chocolate eyes met crystal blue.

"I maded you soup, mama." The small boy said as he raised a mug above his head. Fareeha reached out and took the offered cup with one hand, the other ruffling his hair. She looked up to the doorway and spotted Angela with a sweet smile on her lips. At her side and clutching her leg, as usual, was Ansel. Fareeha leaned to the side and deposited her soup on the bedside table before leaning forward and grabbing up her son.

"But didn't your mami tell you, Kamaj," Fareeha began, settling the squirmy four-year-old into her lap. She locked eyes with her wife and smiled. "Laughter is the best medicine." Angela grinned and lowered her head to hide her slight blush, nudging the boy at her leg forward. He tottered forward slowly, finger in the side of his mouth and looked back to ensure the blonde was

following. When he saw her move forward, he dashed to the blanket ridden Fareeha and jumped onto the bed with a giggle.

The ex-pilot wrapped a blanket covered arm around the new arrival and held her right out for Angela to sink into.

“Ansel made you something as well, Fareehali,” Angela spoke quietly, giving a pointed look to the youngest twin. With a mischievous grin that neither parent took credit for passing on, Ansel withdrew a scrunched up bit of paper from his pocket, which was Fareeha noted, simply down his pants. Ansel held up the paper, unfolding it directly in the ex-pilot’s face causing her to go a bit cross-eyed.

She was still able to make out the crudely drawn Raptora linked to Mercy via yellow stream, a small Raptora and Mercy twin-set at the bottom.

“We keep the sky clear, mama.”

The sound of dropped cup drew Angela to the kitchen to check on the situation.

Judging from the current standings in the Amari household, it would be Kamaj, most likely scaling counters in order to reach something Fareeha had stashed away.

She froze in the doorway.

Ansel stood on a kitchen chair at the sink, covered in suds and soaked to the bone. He turned to look at Angela, wide smile showing his missing teeth. “I did the dishes for you, mami!”

The low hum of the ceiling fan and quiet chirping of crickets was interrupted by the door creaking open, a small strip of light from the nightlight in the hallway illuminating the sleeping Egyptian. Tiny feet padded over the thick carpet, stopping at the side of the bed.

“Mama.” Dark amber eyes shot open, locking on the small boy inches from her face. Tear tracks painted his face, nose wet and finger in its usual place in the side of his mouth. Fareeha lifted the

blanket and beckoned Ansel up to the bed. The boy quickly jumped up, tucking into Fareeha's arms.

The Egyptian pulled him close, his small back slotting perfectly against her chest. She wrapped a secure arm around him, a silent promise of safety. "Did you have a nightmare, habibi?" A sniff and a small nod were the reply. "Was it about mami?" Fareeha asked after a few moments of silence.

"She was sleeping an' didn't wake up," Ansel whispered, voice watery.

Fareeha gave a small sigh and dropped a kiss to the messy hair at her nose.

"Mami is fine, little bird. She'll be back before you know it."

"But she didn't wake up." The repeated words proof that the dream shook her son to his core.

"Your mami can take care of herself, Ansel. She's the strongest woman I've ever met." The small back stiffened before shifting, blue eyes nearly glowing when they locked on her.

"No way!" Came the small voice, causing Fareeha to preen at his surprise. It was nice to see that her son felt she was stro- "There's no way she's stronger than Auntie Zary." Chocolate eyes narrowed on her son before attacking his sides with nimble fingers.

"I'll stop when you admit I'm stronger." Fareeha threatened through laughs of her own, her low timbre nearly harmonizing with his higher pitched giggles.

"Mama is stronger!" Ansel squeezed out between laughs.

Fareeha nudged him back to his side, tucking him under an arm and chin. "That's more like it." She grinned and dropped another kiss on the top of his head. "Now sleep, little bird. I'll keep the nightmares away."

Hanzo was relaxing in the back garden when a visibly angry Kamaj stomped out onto the back porch, arms crossed and bottom lip juttet out. Hanzo looked from the boy to the sliding glass door

and to Jesse and Ansel sat at the dining table just beyond.

“Uncle Hano!” Kamaj demanded, angry blue eyes locking on the Japanese man as he thundered his way over. “Ansel being mean.” Small arms wiped at dampened cheeks. “Bring me his head!”

Any words of comfort that Hanzo was gathering flew from his mind at the strange command from his godson. “*Nan* - What did you say?”

“Bring me his head.”

Hanzo sighed and reached over to tug the small boy into his lap, eyes boring into Kamaj’s watery blue. “Do not say that. You do not know what it means.”

Kamaj was already nodding. “Do too, Uncle Hano. Means him die.” Sticky hands came up to brace against either side of Hanzo’s face, mushing into his cheeks. “Ansel mean, Ansel die.”

He said it with such finality that Hanzo had to swallow and take a moment to wrap his mind around the situation. He reached up and gently plucked the boy’s hands from his face with a sigh. “You cannot kill your brother.”

“Why?”

“Because he will be the one there to fight for you and defend you when you have no other.” Dark eyes dropped to the small hands clenched against his chest, mind drifting to a different brother. “Your brother is your ally, not your enemy.”

A pair of manila folders were dropped against the table to straighten their contents as an elderly woman scooted toward her desk. With a few deft flicks of her hand, the folders were flipped open and she leaned across the papers to address Angela and Fareeha.

“Your sons tested remarkably. They are more advanced than the standard child we see in our kindergarten classes.” Both mothers beamed at this news though they’d expected and prepared for it. Judging by their advantages and testing, I’m suggesting they skip ahead to a class level that is more challenging.”

Angela stared at the woman, eyes slightly narrowed. “They are not skipping kindergarten. It teaches social skills more than anything substantial for further education.”

Fareeha nodded. “They’ve never been around children their age for extended periods. They’ve only known adults.”

“Your children would receive the same social training from a first or second year class as well.” The woman continued.

“Yes, and they would learn the joys of being outcasts because of their age,” Angela said with a huff, arms crossing over her chest.

Fareeha held up a calming hand as she looked between her wife and the school representative. “They will attend kindergarten this year and *then* we can speak about moving them ahead. Does that seem fair?” Fareeha’s gaze shifted solely to her wife. Angela agreed with a puff of air through her nose.

Fareeha and Angela walked the five-year-old twins into their shared room and pointed them to Kamaj’s bed. When they were perched on the edge Fareeha knelt before them, Angela joining them on the bed.

“Boys, we have some news,” Fareeha said, a hand on each boy’s knee. “Remember how mami and I told you that we wanted two special boys so much that we did whatever we could to get them?” The boys nodded, Ansel glancing up to Angela. The blonde gave him a reassuring rub on the back before looking pointedly back to her wife.

“Mami and I decided that we wanted one more for our family. We wanted you to have someone to love and play with and to watch your backs as much as you will theirs.” Fareeha looked up at Angela, pride and happiness evident in her brown eyes.

“So in a few months,” Angela began, smiling as both boys looked over with excitement. “You’ll have a little sister.” She smoothed a hand over her slightly swollen belly.

“And you two will have to protect her. Just like we will protect you all.” Fareeha said, pulling their attention back.

“Just like you protect seebillians, mama?” Ansel asked, earning a chuckle from the doctor as his pronunciation.

“Yes, little bird, just like that,” Fareeha said with a chuckle. “Can you do that for us?”

Both boys nodded fervently. Kamaj spoke up, his face fierce. “Cross our hearts and hope to die.”

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